



TRAVEL MONTANA

Montana Department of Commerce
Anthony J. Preite, Director
406-841-2700
Contact: Barb Sanem, Promotion
Division, 406-841-2769

Four Statewide Tourism Award Winners Honored at Governor's Conference

March 22, 2005 – Helena - Four statewide tourism award winners were honored for their achievements by the Montana Tourism and Recreation Industry at the 2005 Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation held in Helena, March 21-22. Governor Brian Schweitzer opened the awards' banquet Tuesday night, March 22, with remarks to the attendees. Lt. Governor John Bohlinger presented the tourism awards.

The 2005 statewide tourism award winners are:

- Dr. Joe Medicine Crow, Tourism Person of the Year
- Livingston, Tourism Community of the Year
- Augusta American Legion Rodeo, Tourism Event of the Year
- Russell Country Tourism Region and the Great Falls Convention & Visitors Bureau, Tourism Partnership of the Year

Dr. Joe Medicine Crow, the official Crow Tribal Historian for almost a half century, was honored for a lifetime of work protecting and promoting Crow Culture while building bridges with non-Indians through cultural education and outreach. Dr. Medicine Crow wrote the original outline and script for the popular Custer's Last Stand Reenactment that takes place every June near Hardin. For two decades he served as the Crow Fair & Rodeo master of ceremonies. He was involved in creating the Crow Nation's Little Bighorn College, has authored numerous books on Crow history and culture, served as an advisor to numerous films, and has been a frequent speaker at high

schools, colleges, conferences, seminars and workshops. Dr. Medicine Crow, now in his 90s, grew up learning history and culture from grandfathers who had been at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. He was the first Crow Nation male to attend college and earn a master's degree (Anthropology, USC, 1939). He has since been awarded honorary doctorates from the University of Southern California (2003), Rocky Mountain College (2000), and the University of Montana (1996).

The Livingston community was recognized for the preservation and promotion of its historic downtown buildings which, along with the area's many art galleries, restaurants, and entertainment venues, are an attraction for cultural and heritage visitors. It has hosted Livingston feature film productions such as "A River Runs Through It" and "The Horse Whisperer" and is home to an active segment of Montana's Film Production and Film Service Industry. The tourism award also recognizes the public/private partnership that allows the community to host many events, improve local infrastructure and support community activities.

The Augusta American Legion Rodeo award acknowledges that this event has grown from being a small local activity in 1936 to the one of the largest one-day rodeos in the northwest states. The late June rodeo, along with its parades and art show, attracts more than 3,000 people to the community of 300.

The Russell Country tourism region and the Great Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau received recognition for pooling their financial and technical marketing resources to produce larger, more attractive ad campaigns and travel guides along with beginning the creation of a local network for generating new marketing ideas for Great Falls and north central Montana. Both partners recognized they were trying to reach the same type of visitors with their individual budgets. By joining efforts, they have improved their effectiveness for the areas they represent.

Tourism is one of Montana's leading industries. In 2003, 9.67 million people visited Montana, spending \$1.87 billion during their stay. Those visitors supported 37,000 Montana jobs and provided for \$597 million in worker salaries. For every tourism "bed tax" dollar spent on promotion by the state and its regional and local partners, Montana visitors contribute \$185 to the state's economy.

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